

The CONTRACEPTIVE PATCH (“THE PATCH”)



What is a contraceptive patch?

The contraceptive patch is a weekly hormonal birth control method that is worn on the skin to prevent pregnancy.

How does the patch work?

Like birth control pills, the patch works by releasing female hormones in your body. These hormones prevent pregnancy in the following ways:

They may:

- Keep the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm
- Cause changes to the cervical mucus making it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus
- Keep a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus

How well does the patch work?

When used correctly, the patch works about 97-99% of the time.

However, the patch can be less effective in women who are over 198 pounds.

Why is the patch a good choice for me?

The patch is easy to use. You only have to think about birth control once a week.

Is there anyone who should not use the patch?

Most women can use the patch without having any problems. You should not use the patch if:

1. You are pregnant or think you might be.
2. You have pain in your chest or your eyeballs look yellow.
3. You have bleeding from your vagina and don't know why.
4. You have ever had a heart attack, stroke or blood clots.
5. You have ever had liver tumors or cancer.

How do I know if I have a problem from using the patch?

If you have any of these warning signs, call your doctor, nurse or clinic right away:

- Bad pain in your arms or legs or you lose feeling.
- Headaches, dizziness or fainting.
- Eye problems (if you see flashing lights, have fuzzy vision or suddenly can't see).
- Pain in your stomach or belly, or if you get very sick to your stomach all of a sudden.

Cigarette smoking increases your risk of serious side effects, especially if you are more than 35 years old. Women who use birth control methods with hormones should not smoke.

Facts About the Contraceptive Patch ("The Patch"), cont.

What are the side effects of the patch?

The most common side effects of the patch are similar to the birth control pill and include: breast tenderness, nausea, headache, irritation on the skin where the patch is located; and irregular bleeding.

How do you use the patch?

- Choose one of the following ways to start using the patch:
 1. You can start using the patch on the first day of your period. The patch will be effective immediately and you do not need to use back up birth control.
 - or
 2. If you do not begin using the patch on the first day of your period, you will need to use a non-hormonal backup method for one full week. Never begin using the patch if there is any chance of pregnancy.
- Place one patch on your buttock, abdomen, upper outer arm or upper torso, in a place where it won't be rubbed by tight clothing. Do not put the patch on your breasts.
- Only wear one patch each week. Change your patch on the same day of each week. This day is known as the "Patch Change Day." For example, if the first patch is applied on a Monday, all other patches should be applied each Monday.
- A new patch is applied every week for three weeks. It is best if you do not apply a new patch to the same place but switch to another part of the body.
- You will not wear a patch during week four and you should expect your period during this time.

DOCTOR/CLINIC PHONE NUMBER:

Example Cycle:

- Week One - Apply one new patch.
- Week Two - Remove old patch and apply new patch.
- Week Three - Remove old patch and apply new-patch.
- Week Four - Remove old patch and your period should start this week.

- Remember: Every new patch should be applied on the same day of the week for three weeks.
- Do not wear make-up, creams, lotions, powders or other topical products where the patch is or will be placed.

Can I breastfeed my baby while using the patch?

No. Nursing mothers should not use the patch until they have completely weaned their child.

Where can I get the patch?

You can get a prescription for the patch at the health department, a family planning clinic or a doctor's office.

REMEMBER:

Using the Patch will not keep you from getting AIDS or any other disease you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex condom each time you have sex.